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[Parkinsonism Relat Disord](#). 2020 Mar;72:13-22. doi: 10.1016/j.parkreldis.2020.02.002.

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Effects of Working Memory Training in Patients With Parkinson's Disease Without Cognitive Impairment: A Randomized Controlled Trial

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Abstract

Objective: To determine the feasibility and evaluate effects of a computerized working memory (WM) training (WMT) in patients with Parkinson's Disease (PD) on cognitive and clinical outcomes.

Methods: 76 patients with PD without cognitive impairment were randomized to either the WMT group (n = 37), who participated in a 5-week adaptive WMT, or a passive waiting-list control group (CG, n = 39). Patients underwent clinical and neuropsychological examination at baseline, after training, and at 3-months follow-up, with verbal WM and non-verbal WM as primary outcomes. Outcome assessors were blinded for group allocation.

Results: All WMT participants completed the training successfully and reported high levels of motivation for and satisfaction with the training. Repeated-measures, linear mixed-effects models revealed positive training effects for the WMT group compared to the CG in verbal working memory with a small relative effect size 0.39 [95%CI 0.05; 0.76] for the 3-months follow-up only. No other reliable training effects in cognitive and clinical variables were found for either point of time.

Conclusions: In this randomized controlled trial, WMT was feasible and yielded some evidence for 3-months follow-up training gains in patients with PD. WMT might be an effective intervention to prevent cognitive decline in this patient group, however, more longitudinal studies with longer follow-up periods and more sensitive assessment tools will have to proof this concept.

Trial registration: German Clinical Trials Register (DRKS00009379).

Keywords: Non-pharmacological intervention; Parkinson's disease; Randomized controlled trial; Working memory training.

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